

A vintage black and white photograph of a man in military flight gear standing next to a snow-covered aircraft engine. The man is wearing a dark leather flight cap, a light-colored flight suit with dark gloves and boots, and a fur-lined hood. He is looking towards the camera. The aircraft engine is partially covered in snow. The background is a blue map with white lines and text, including "20W", "40W", and "20N".

The Life & Adventures of William Lashly

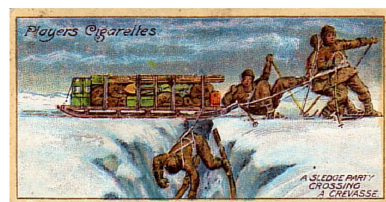
George & Valerie Skinner

Discovery Expedition Timeline



1901

21 March – Discovery research ship Launched by Lady Markham.
6 August – Sailed from Cowes via South Trinidad for the Cape, arriving 3 October.
24 December – eve of William's 34th birthday. Left Lyttelton, New Zealand, for the Antarctic.



1902

3 January – crossed Antarctic Circle.
4 January – entered the pack-ice of the Ross Sea.
8 January – first sight of Antarctica.
30 January – sailed along Ross Ice Front & discovered Edward VII Land.
4 February – balloon ascents abandoned before William tries.
9 February – made Winter Quarters, William building Hut and rigging windmill.
23 June – Midwinter celebrations.
10 September – William's first sledge journey – when his sleeping bag blew off!
2 November – Scott, Shackleton and Wilson left on southern journey.
29 November – Armitage and party left on Western Journey to Victoria Land.
25 December – William's 35th birthday.
31 December – Southern party reached farthest south latitude 82°16'S.

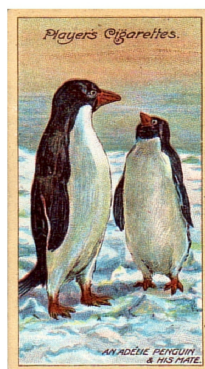
1903

19 January – Western party returned.
11 January – getting ship ready for sea.
24 January – relief ship *Morning* arrived.
3 February – Southern party returned.
4 February – William volunteered to stay behind for a second winter.
2 March – *Morning* relief ship departed.
April to August – Second winter.
September – Wilson visited Cape Crozier Emperor penguin rookery.
12 October – William left with western sledge journey to inland plateau.
22 November – William, Evans and Scott continued journey.
14 December – All three fell down slope. William saved Scott from crevasse.
24 December – Arrived at Discovery just in time for William's 36th birthday.



1904

14 February – Relief ships *Morning* and *Terra Nova* reached Discovery.
16 February – *Discovery* at last freed from ice.
17 February – Left winter quarters.
5 March – Re-crossed Antarctic Circle.
2 April – *Terra Nova* *Discovery* & *Morning* reached Lyttelton, New Zealand.
8 June – *Discovery* left Lyttelton.
9 September – Arrived in the Channel.
10 September – Arrived Portsmouth.
15 September – Berthed East India Dock, London.



The Life and Adventures of William Lashly

George and Valerie Skinner

August 2013
Revised and reprinted
July 2017

This biography has been written by George and Valerie Skinner. Valerie is William Lashly's first cousin three times removed. Her husband George was a researcher and teacher at the University of Manchester for many years and, in retirement, has worked on piecing together what is known about William's life.



First published to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the safe return in 1913 of William Lashly on the *Terra Nova* expedition to the Antarctic. Revised and reprinted in 2017, the 150th anniversary of William's birth.

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Foreword

William Lashly can truly be described as a remarkable man and a very fine Englishman. In a more than full life his sterling character earned him the respect and affection of all who knew him.

Lashly had the rare distinction of serving throughout both of Captain Scott's Antarctic expeditions, that of the *Discovery* (1901-1904) as well as that of the *Terra Nova* (1910-13).

On the latter expedition, Lashly, with my grandfather Lieutenant Edward (Teddy) Evans RN and Petty Officer Tom Crean RN, was one of the last people to see Scott, Wilson, Oates, Bowers and Petty Officer Edgar (Taff) Evans RN alive as they set off for the final push for the Pole. After giving what they described as three hearty cheers for their colleagues, the three turned and commenced the 800 mile journey back to Cape Evans.

Lashly's diary with its understatement and enviable economy of style tells the story of the deterioration of Lieutenant Evans' condition due to chronic scurvy to the point where he collapsed on day 42 of the return journey. Lashly and Crean then refused my grandfather's order to leave him, putting him on a sledge and pulling him to safety.

Without the courage and devotion of his two colleagues my grandfather would undoubtedly have died.

William Lashly was a modest man who steadfastly refused to blow his own trumpet. It is high time that a book is produced on this gallant figure, without whose courage, endurance and resourcefulness, I would not be here and would not have the privilege of writing this Foreword.

Lord Mountevans,
Lord Mayor of the City of London 2015-16



Hambledon at the end of 19th century

From Hambledon to Antarctica and Back

William Lashly was born into a Hampshire farming family on Christmas Day, 1867. His father was a thatcher in Hambledon and William, as his Antarctic letters and diaries reveal, grew up to know and to love the countryside.

He joined Hambledon village school as a four-year-old in April 1872. The school records show that he had completed his Standard One basic education by 1875, although he does not seem to have continued to achieve passes in the higher standards provided at the school. Like most village children at the time he only spent a few years in full-time education and he left the school in April 1879 when he was 11 years old. At first he helped his father on the estate where the family were tenant workers and where William learnt, among other things, the job of a carter.



Hambledon school-house and school.

Then, at the age of 21, William joined the Royal Navy as a trainee stoker. From that point on he was living at sea or in Portsmouth, or much later in Cardiff. For over six years during his Navy career he lived in the Antarctic on Captain Scott's two expeditions. But the countryside never seemed to be far from his mind, as Captain Scott observed on more than one occasion.

On October 19th 1896 he returned to Hambledon to marry Alice Cox in the village church where, as a young man, he had rung the bells and sung in the choir. After their wedding they set up home in Portsmouth where they had baby Alice early in 1900.

William retained strong links with the village and wrote to his mother, who lived in Hambledon all her life, from the Antarctic when he was

there on the two expeditions. The children at the village school also followed his exploits. On August 1st 1913, the school Log Book records how he arrived at school to talk to the children just a few days after receiving his Albert Medal for saving Lieutenant Evans' life on Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition:

A most interesting Lecture on the Antarctic Expedition was given to 60 of the older children by Chief Stoker W. Lashly, a native of the Village and an old school boy – one of the survivors of the ill fated expedition. The time occupied 2.30 to 3.15 was full of graphic descriptions of a life at high latitudes, and at the close the Medal awarded by the King at Buckingham Palace on the previous Saturday was handed round for inspection.

The report says that the whole school then enjoyed an excellent tea, after which William was sent on his way to Portsmouth with “three hearty cheers”. The pupils continued their celebrations with maypole dancing and games until seven pm.

After the First World War, in which William served in the Royal Navy Reserve, the family moved to Cardiff where William worked for the Board of Trade. On his retirement they returned to Hambledon where they lived in a house built for him in West Street and which he called *Minna Bluff* after a rocky outcrop in Antarctica, on the route to the South Pole. In his hall he kept the sledge harness he and Tom Crean used to haul Lieutenant Evans to safety on Scott's last Antarctic expedition.

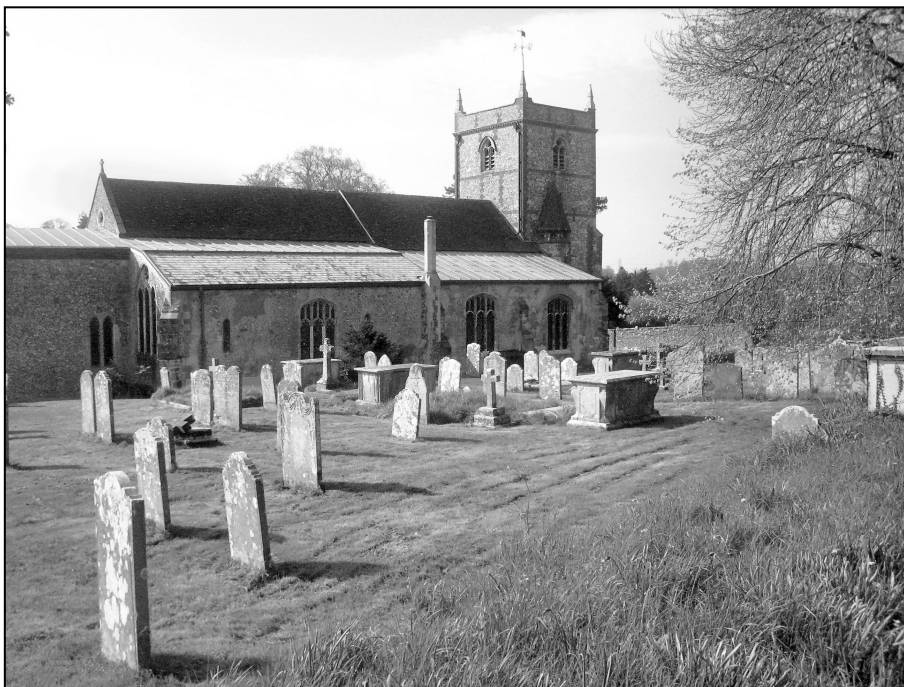
According to the recollections of villagers, William was a quiet and private person, but in his retirement he still continued to make "lantern slide" presentations of his Antarctic experiences.



Minna Bluff, Hambledon

It was during this time that he entered into correspondence with the Irish engraver and university teacher Robert Gibbings concerning the use of his field notes from the *Terra Nova* expedition in a printing project for students. William exchanged letters with him in 1938 and 1939, often reflecting on the challenges of life as a polar explorer. “*We are now dwindling down,*” he wrote to Gibbings, “*I am really the only man that did both the Scott expeditions from beginning to the end.*” He was keen that young people should hear about what he and other explorers had achieved in the Antarctic, though he also observed, “*I wonder will anyone go there again. I don’t think so!*” He never seems to have regretted the hardship of being on Captain Scott’s expeditions and retained his enthusiasm until the end of his life.

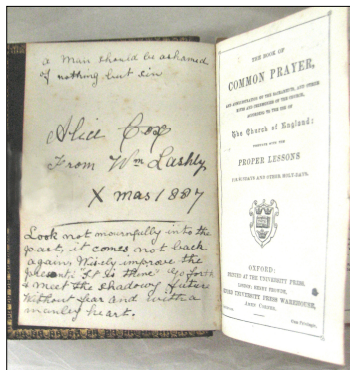
William lived out the rest of his life in Hambledon and was buried, as he had requested, in an unmarked grave in the village church graveyard. Perhaps he would have been surprised that many years later the village decided to remember his life and achievements by calling a new village housing project ‘Lashly Meadow’.



A Career in the Royal Navy 1889-1913

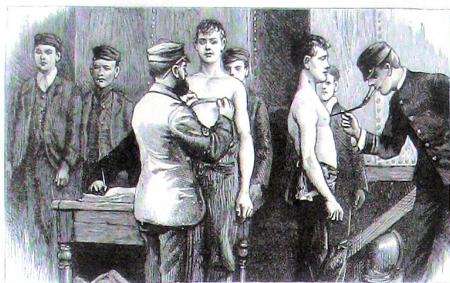
The Stoker Trade

William's older brother took up the mantle of their father's trade as a thatcher. His other two brothers left Hambledon to join the Army. Torn between the security of home and the attractions of travel, William chose the more adventurous option and when he was 21 set off for nearby Portsmouth to sign up as a stoker in the Royal Navy. He left behind in Hambledon a clue to his decision. At Christmas 1888 he had presented his friend and future wife, Alice Cox, with a copy of the Book of Common Prayer (now held by the Dundee Heritage Trust) inscribed in his simple handwriting with a quote from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Hyperion* of a motto discovered in a German graveyard: "*Look not mournfully into the Past. It comes not back again. Wisely improve the Present. It is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy Future, without fear, and with a manly heart.*"

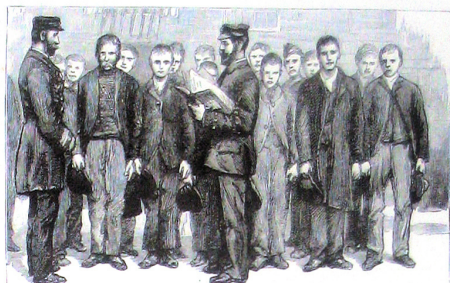


Portsmouth, with its naval dockyard, was just eleven miles from Hambledon and the popularity of all things associated with the sea and the navy continued to flourish in Victorian society during the last quarter of the 19th century. The draw of the Navy must have been strong for a young man growing up in a village where job prospects were limited. There was a great need in the Navy at the end of the 19th century for stokers to work on the relatively new steam-powered ships. The role of stoker provided an ideal pathway into the Service for those lacking higher formal educational qualifications or training.

The minimum height for recruits was five feet three inches (William was five feet six-and-a-half inches on enlistment). Applicants under twenty-one years of age had to have a chest measurement of at least 34 inches (86.5cm). The only other requirements were that they should be of very good character and able-bodied.



CANDIDATES PASSING THE DOCTOR



"ARE YOU WILLING TO SERVE FOR TWELVE YEARS?"



NEWLY-JOINED MEN DRAWING THEIR RATIONS



AT PHYSICAL DRILL



"KITTING" THE NEW HANDS UP



TRAINING-CLASS—LEARNING THE USE OF THE RIFLE



CUTLASS DRILL



THE FINISHED ARTICLE—STOKERS WAITING TO BE DRAFTED TO A SEA-GOING SHIP

"Stokers for the British Navy" from the *Graphic Magazine*, 1890.



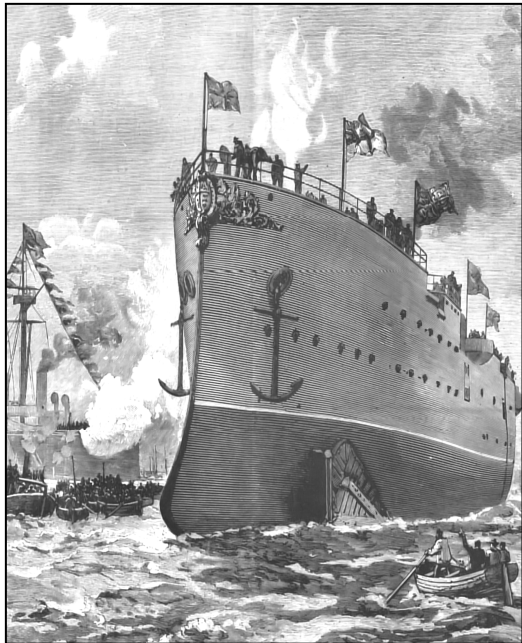
Although the stoker's job was essentially a manual one the term is misleading. In a recruiting feature of the time, the *Graphic Magazine* argued that "*in these days of machinery the stoker is an almost more important personage on board a war-ship than Jack Tar himself.*" Lashly's stoker training was remarkably wide-ranging from the uses of firearms and the cutlass to advanced mechanics. Recruits were required to commit themselves to an initial period of twelve years' service. During this time good opportunities were provided by the Navy for the trainee to acquire a range of military and technical skills. The photograph, taken when William was on the *Discovery* expedition, shows him in his Royal Navy uniform.

After his initial training at Portsmouth, William was drafted to *HMS Terror* in October 1889 for three years' service on the North America & West Indies Station. At the time when William joined the Navy, ships were used for several purposes other than sailing the high seas. When not at sea William lived afloat in docked ships known as "receiving ships" which were, in effect, floating barracks. This was the role of William's first ship *HMS Terror*, stationed at the Royal Navy dockyard in Bermuda, having been previously the guard ship there.

For many years Britain had maintained a Royal Naval Dockyard in Halifax, Nova Scotia, but in 1818, when the base became too vulnerable to attack from American forces, it was moved to Bermuda, well beyond the operating range of the United States Navy but well-placed strategically in the mid-Atlantic. William's time on *HMS Terror* appears to have been one of his quieter periods at sea. The role of the ship was to receive newcomers to the base and to fulfil the formal responsibilities of a flagship.

When William returned from his three-year spell on *HMS Terror* to be stationed in the Victory II base ship, he could not have failed to be impressed by the new state-of-the-art *HMS Royal Arthur* cruiser which had just been completed in the Portsmouth Dockyard. He joined the ship as a stoker on March 2nd 1893.

William spent 18 months patrolling the coast of South America based at Lima in Peru, Puerto Coquimbo in Chile and Esquimalt or Victoria in British Columbia. In November 1894 the ship was ordered to proceed to Peru where a revolution was in progress. In April 1895 the ship was in Panama and then Corinto in Nicaragua to demand the release of the British Consul and subjects seized by locals. Detachments were landed and the port was occupied.

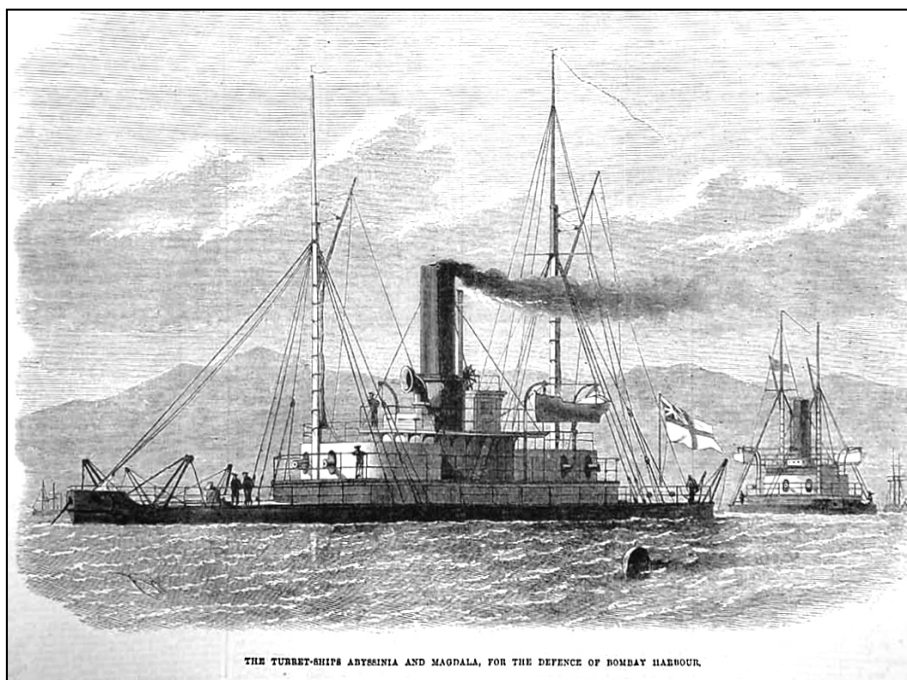


*HMS Royal Arthur from the
Graphic Magazine.*

On the ship, sharing these adventures, was an eighteen-year-old Irish seaman called Tom Crean. Whether William had much to do with him is not known but their paths crossed again in December 1901 when Tom Crean transferred to the *Discovery* from *HMS Ringarooma* while she was docked in Lyttelton, New Zealand, waiting to set out for the Antarctic. They were together again for the *Terra Nova* expedition during which they saved the life of Lieutenant Evans on the return journey of the last supporting party of Captain Scott's march to the South Pole.

William's next main posting was to *HMS Magdala* where he served in the Indian Harbour Defence Force, East Indies Station, from January 1st 1900 to February 17th 1901. *Magdala*, along with her almost identical sister ship *Abyssinia*, was built in the late 1860s specifically to serve as a coastal defence ship for the harbour of Bombay. It had a number of special features including being one of the first ships to have breastwork protection. It had no sail power at all and relied entirely on steam engines. Apart from gunnery practice at sea, *Magdala* remained in Bombay Harbour for her entire career. The crew

consisted of about fifty per cent British seamen, stokers and marines (with their own officers) and the rest was made up of Indian lascars selected from experienced sailors of the Malabar coastal areas.



In February 1901 William was back with *HMS Duke of Wellington* in Portsmouth Docks. The 1901 National Census records that in March he was living with his wife and daughter Alice (aged one) at 38 Elmsworth Road, Portsmouth. He had just signed up for ten more years in the Navy, to complete the time required for his pension, but in June he joined the *Discovery*, the purpose-built scientific research ship which Captain Scott had had constructed in Dundee for his expedition to the Antarctic. For the next three and a half years while, as his naval record puts it, “*lent for service with the National Antarctic Expedition*”, William was registered with *HMS President*, the training ship for the Royal Naval Reserve based at the West India Dock, London.

The *Discovery* Expedition 1901-1904

The National Antarctic Expedition of 1901 grew out of a series of nineteenth century exploratory visits to Antarctic regions by American, European and British explorers. A Polar Year was arranged for 1901 with British, German and Swedish expeditions working in different sectors of the continent. Britain was to work in the Ross Sea area.

The main individual driving force behind the idea was Admiral Sir Clements Markham, a controversial character who had experience of polar climates and was President of the powerful and influential Royal Geographical Society. As early as 1895 he had resolved to organise an expedition to explore the Antarctic. Its purpose was defined from the start as an essentially scientific venture to further knowledge of this still mysterious place.

Captain Robert F. Scott was appointed to lead the expedition and soon set about choosing those who would go with him. As an experienced naval officer he was determined that the expedition would “*not only be of honour to his country but to the honour of his service*”. Apart from those who had specialist scientific knowledge, most of the company were selected primarily for their skills in seamanship. The only member of the whole expedition who had been to the Antarctic before was Louis Bernacchi, an expert in meteorology and magnetic work who was on the *Southern Cross* expedition in 1898.

It was due to Captain Scott's persistence that, apart from the expert scientists, most members of the ship's company were chosen from the Royal Navy. William Lashly was one of those selected and joined the *Discovery* in London on June 30th 1901. Why William volunteered for such a risky venture is not clear but when in retirement people asked him why he had gone his reply was, “*What should we know if we did not go adventuring?*”

A month later the ship sailed for Spithead. William had two days leave at home then, on August 6th, in the words of his diary, “*I said good bye to wife & Child went on board proceeded to Cowes & was inspected by the King and Queen.*”

Sailing South

The journey to the Antarctic, via Trinidad, South Africa and New Zealand took five months. William (2nd from the left on the deck) did not get his first sight of Antarctica until January 8th 1902. The ship explored the coast looking for likely landing places and reaching the furthest south of any ship. Eventually, as much by circumstances as choice, and with the Antarctic summer season drawing to a close, *Discovery* anchored in McMurdo Sound at the south-west corner of Ross Island. William kept a detailed diary of these days, recording the sighting (and capture) of different kinds of seals and penguins, as well as writing descriptions of the landscape.



William's diary for January 9th 1902 reads:

"Last night being clear the sun was shining beautifully all night - quite summer weather we are having now. Sighted Mount Sabine at 11.30pm 120 miles off at the back of Cape Adare. I have been on shore for a look round. There is nothing here except volcanic eruption and stones. This is where the members of the Southern Cross wintered while they were here... I have left a letter here to my wife - she may get it some day if the postman should happen to come this way."

William also records the events of the day when they tried out two balloons that had been loaned to them by the War Office. William was part of the ‘balloon party’ and had been to Aldershot for instruction in their use. He helped to prepare the balloons and Captain Scott (despite not having had the training) was first to go up but it was difficult to keep the balloons inflated and the wind speed made further trials too dangerous, so William never made full use of his training.

At this point they were still using the ship to explore the Antarctic coast and William frequently refers to “*getting up steam*”, the auxiliary engine being intended for situations just like this when careful manoeuvring among the ice in its various forms was essential. Once they had found somewhere for a base their main work was to prepare for the winter. William was part of the team responsible for erecting the huts and the windmill, which sat on the deck of the ship and was to be used for generating electricity. But he also had time on February 2nd to play “*a very good game*” of football on the ice.

Throughout the Antarctic winter months, they made preparation for the scientific work and the exploring they would do when the sun returned. This included working with the dog teams, packing the sledges and preparing for camping out on the polar ice.

William was busy organizing the base so he didn’t join the first big sledge party. When the party returned after an eventful time, which included the death of Seaman George Vince, William wrote at untypical length in his diary, analyzing in detail the report of the sledge team’s battle with the weather and the difficult terrain. His account of them venturing out when they should have remained in the tent, protected from the bitter winds, and how inept they were in using the equipment and adopting safe procedures illustrates how much the expedition members still had to learn about life in the Antarctic.

“We are thinking of the sledge party all day...We know they are getting close to the ship, but if they get into the tent and keep out of the wind they will be all right. But it appears they struck camp at 8 o’clock and proceeded on their way towards the ship...They had not gone far before they all went down an ice slope. Vince having fur boots could not bring up at all on the ice so went clean over the cliff into the sea below and no way whatever of getting back.”

By the middle of March the ship was frozen in for the Antarctic winter. Further attempts at sledging were not much more successful. Captain Scott wrote in his report, *“in one way or another each journey had been a failure, we had nothing to show for our labours”*. The outstanding journeys completed later in the expedition prove that at least they had learned from their mistakes.

When September came round William was eager to go on his first trip and wrote in his diary of the preparations he was making. He made a full list of all the rations he would have to carry. The party left the ship on September 9th in a temperature of 33 degrees below freezing. They camped at 5 o'clock.

“First of all up tent, then get cookers ready and start the evening meal, which we all very much enjoyed after the first day’s tramp...It don’t take very long to get these things ready as the primus lamp very soon fetches the water to boiling pitch... As soon as the meal is over there is nothing to be done but clear out the gear for the sleeping bags to be brought in and then turn in. This is the worst of sledging – nights, specially in such low temperatures as we are experiencing the first night out 48° below zero is a little below the ordinary sledging done before.”

By January it was well into the Antarctic summer and the relief ship *Morning* visited with mail and provisions and collected those from the party who needed to return. William volunteered to stay in the Antarctic for a second winter. The men spent the long, dark winter days and nights preparing for the research which was planned to take place once the sun returned.

William saves Captain Scott’s life

It was December 15th 1903 - summer in the Antarctic - and the second sledging season was under way. On the wild expanse of Antarctica’s Victoria Land a small party of explorers fought against the bitter cold and gale force winds. They had done reasonably well today and were now making their way back to the small depot at the aptly named Desolation Camp, where they would find shelter from the wind and food to warm and nourish them after their 70 days of manhauling their eleven-foot sledge. Scott himself led the three-man team accompanied

by Seaman Evans and Stoker William Lashly. Between them they hauled a 600lb load, the three men harnessed together to provide the pulling power needed.

They had just survived one small mishap when the sledge had jolted to a halt on a rugged stretch of ice spilling much of its load. Such events were part of everyday work and they retrieved what they could and pressed on, Scott in front and his two harnessed colleagues on either side and a little further back. It was now nearly two years since the *Discovery* had landed on the shores of Antarctica with its party of 50 men and many months of hard practice had taught them how to move about the frozen landscape relatively safely. But the death of Able Seaman George Vince during an early attempt at making progress across the unforgiving terrain in bad weather was never far from their minds.

As they crossed the homeward stretch the sledge began to skid and William, responding quickly to Scott's shout, pulled wide to steady it. Scott's diary records what happened next:

"He had scarcely moved out in response to this order when Evans and I stepped on nothing and disappeared from his view; by a miracle he saved himself from following, and sprang back with his whole weight on the trace; the sledge flashed by him and jumped the crevasse down which we had gone, one side of its frame cracked through in the jerk which followed, but the other side mercifully held...I saw at once what a frail support remained, and shouted to Lashly to ask what he could do, and then I knew the value of such a level-headed companion; for whilst he held on grimly to the sledge and us with one hand, his other was busily employed in withdrawing our skis. At length he succeeded in sliding two of these beneath the broken sledge thereby making it more secure."

But this still left the two men hanging precariously and William could do little more because whenever he relaxed his grip on the sledge it began to slip. Scott and Evans had to try to climb out unaided and, after a word with Evans, Scott decided to try first; though he confessed afterwards that he never expected to reach the top. *"Then came a mighty effort, till I reached the stirrup formed*

by the rope span of the sledge, and then, mustering all the strength that remained, I reached the sledge itself and flung myself on to the snow beyond. Lashly said, 'Thank God!' and it was perhaps then that I realized that his position had been the worst of all."

Scott and William then hauled up Evans and after resting a while continued their journey cautiously, eventually arriving at the supply depot at six o'clock. Here they found a small quantity of food which William cooked, "*singing a merry stave*", says Scott, "*as he stirred the pot.*"

Afterwards, it took more than a week for them to reach the ice-locked *Discovery*. By then it was Christmas, 1903, and William's 36th birthday. In the comfort of the *Discovery*, Scott calculated that the three men had hauled themselves and the sledge across nearly eleven hundred miles of ice and had climbed almost 20,000 feet. Later, William, in typical concise and modest fashion, described the final events of this memorable journey in his diary:

"All of a sudden the Captain and Evans disappeared down a crevasse and carried away one of the sledge runners, leaving me on top. It was now my duty to try to get them up again. After I saw they were safely dangling down there in space I at once secured the sledge with a pair of ski, and held on to the other end while the Captain climbed up out. Rather a difficult thing to do especially as his hands were getting frost-bitten all the time. But finally he succeeded. We then pulled Evans up and once more proceeded on our way down to the Nunotak where we camped in the calm and warmest corner we had found for the last five weeks and pretty well in safety."

Scott allowed himself more passion in reflecting on his two companions and what, despite many setbacks, they had managed to accomplish:

"With these two men behind me our sledge seemed to become a living thing, and the days of slow progress were numbered. We took the rough and the smooth alike, working patiently on through the long hours with scarce a word and never a halt between meal and meal."

In his diary Scott also records how William's spirits remained high as they proceeded down the valley to the moraine of mud below the glacier and how William, revealing his farming background, had observed, "*What a splendid place for growing spuds!*"

Almost 100 years later, Kristan Hutchison writing in the United States Antarctic Program Science Foundation journal *The Antarctic Sun*, recalls the story of how, back in 1958, geologist and Antarctic explorer Collin Bull began studies in the very valley Scott, Seaman Evans and William had explored on that precarious journey. They were the first to visit it since Scott's expedition. Eventually they took some of the soil back to their main research station and sowed grass seed in it, and it grew perfectly well - "*proving,*" adds Hutchinson, "*that Lashly was right about potatoes!*"



The Discovery crew (William is 7th from the left, back row)



*The Discovery returns to Portsmouth
(The Graphic, September 17th 1904)*

Back with the Navy 1904-1910

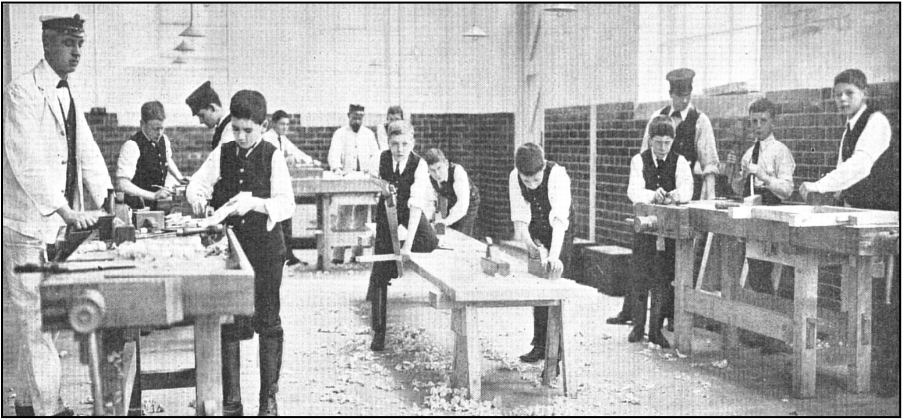
After three more months of exploration and experiments the *Discovery* set course for home via New Zealand and the Falkland Islands arriving in Britain on September 10th 1904, three years and one month after setting sail. In his report to the Admiralty, Captain Scott wrote glowingly about William Lashly and Seaman Evans, illustrating his observations by reference to their remarkable sledge journey together:

“I would remark that I think that journey nearly reached the limit of performance possible under the conditions, in order to point out that it could not have been accomplished had either of these men failed in the smallest degree. Their determination, courage, and patience were often taxed to the utmost, yet I never knew them other than cheerful and respectful. On one occasion Lashly undoubtedly saved our lives by his presence of mind when Evans and I had fallen into a crevasse”.

William was appointed to the steam yacht *HMS Firequeen II*, on October 1st 1904. In response to the appeal made by Captain Scott to the Admiralty to reward outstanding members of his expedition, William was promoted to Chief Stoker from September 10th for services in the *Discovery*, backdated to June 1st 1902.

William as Instructor

In January 1905 William's naval record shows him attached to *HMS Racer*. This was the name given to the Royal Navy College opened at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight in 1903 for officer cadet training. The college was not in the royal house itself but consisted of a series of dormitory and gunroom buildings built where Queen Victoria's stables once stood. Nearby at Kingston, a short walk from the college, there were workshops and on the River Medina was HMS Racer, a 970 ton sloop. No doubt William was able to bring some vivid accounts of his own unique experiences on the *Discovery* and in the Antarctic to the training of these young officers.



Young recruits in the carpentry shop at Osborne College in 1907 from a photo feature in Black & White magazine.

After very brief stays on *HMS Victory II* and *HMS Gladiator* (famously sunk 18 months later after colliding with an American liner) William was appointed to *HMS Proserpine* as Chief Stoker on September 15th 1906. The ship had a crew of 224 men and was armed with a range of guns and two torpedo tubes. It served in the Channel, at Gibraltar, and in the Suez Canal.

Eighteen months into his time with *Proserpine*, William was caught up in a different kind of adventure, this time against gun-runners in the Persian Gulf. Later in the year William was serving with *Proserpine* in its blockading role off Somaliland. For his service there he was awarded the Africa General Service Medal in May 1912, the medal being sent to the College at Greenwich as by then William was away on Captain Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition.

In the autumn of 1908 William was back in England. After short stays on *HMS Sappho*, *HMS Victory* and *HMS Revenge* he spent a year on *HMS Mercury*, the depot ship for submarine training. In Spring 1910 he decided to join the 8,000 men who volunteered for Captain Scott's second expedition to the Antarctic. His previous Antarctic experience and his outstanding work for Scott ensured selection and he joined the *Terra Nova*, sailing from London to Cardiff on June 10th 1910.

The *Terra Nova* Expedition 1910-1913

By 1909, Captain Scott had published plans for another expedition to the Antarctic and began the tasks of raising funds, obtaining a suitable ship and identifying his team. The *Discovery* had been acquired by the Hudson Bay Company and was not available.

The *Terra Nova*, a three-masted, 187-foot wooden sealer with an auxiliary steam engine, built in 1884 in Dundee and used extensively in the Antarctic and the Arctic for whaling and sealing, was eventually chosen and purchased for £12,500.



Lieutenant Evans, who had sailed on the *Morning* for the two National Antarctic Relief Expeditions to the ice-locked *Discovery* during Scott's first expedition, was also planning an expedition based on Cardiff. However, he agreed to join Scott as second-in-charge and began the complicated process of fitting out the *Terra Nova* and also selecting the crew for the *Expedition*.

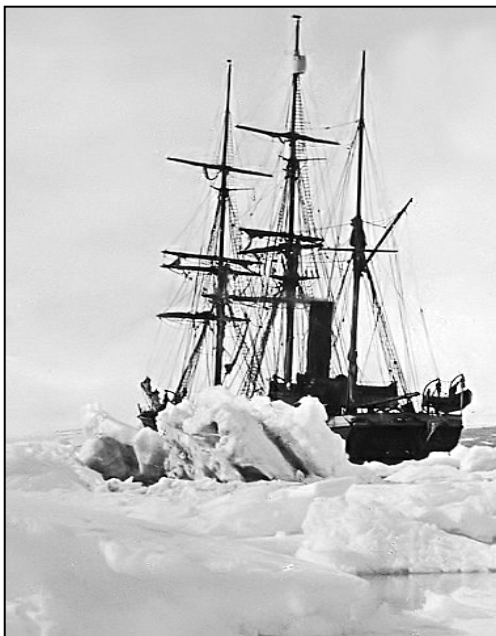
The departure of the ship was from Cardiff on June 15th, 1910. After an eventful sea voyage, the *Terra Nova* arrived in New Zealand, was refitted and left for the Antarctic on November 29th. After another remarkable sea journey they arrived at McMurdo Sound, close to where Captain Scott had been based on his first expedition, on January 4th 1911.

William had already experienced something of the challenge of sailing the Southern Ocean on the *Discovery* expedition. The *Terra Nova* journey proved to be even more traumatic.

Storing the huge quantities of coal and petrol needed, building deck stables for the 19 ponies and space for 33 dogs, not to mention three huge motorsledges (for which William had partial responsibility), were all a threat to the stability of the ship. The ship's pumps, blocked with coal dust, failed to cope with huge, stormy seas which threatened to flood the ship. Only 48 hours out from Lyttelton, New Zealand the wind freshened and for hours they fought against mountainous waves to keep the ship afloat. As Chief Stoker, William was at the centre of the battle, up to his neck in rushing water as he tried to clear the suction inlets of the pumps. In the end they won through, losing only a dog and a pony, ten tons of coal and sixty-five gallons of petrol.

Arrival in the Antarctic

On arrival, a fortnight was spent unloading the ship and building the 50ft by 25ft hut which would provide accommodation for the 'Main Party'. A second group of scientists was to be deposited on King Edward VII Land but because of disembarking problems it was eventually landed at Cape Adare. Unlike the *Discovery* in 1902 the *Terra Nova*, having disembarked the expedition, left Antarctic waters to return with supplies and equipment a year later, then again a year after that to collect the survivors of the expedition.



Terra Nova in the ice

Twenty-five men, including sixteen officers and scientists, overwintered in the hut. As was normal on Royal Navy vessels, officers and men had separate quarters in the hut, William's sleeping billet being slung from rods in the roof over the bunks occupied by two ex-navy men, cook Thomas Clissold and steward F. J. Hooper.

They had arrived a month later than planned so work began quickly on transporting everything to Hut Point, the home depot which was 15 miles across the sea ice. This was followed by laying supply depots ready for the attempt on the Pole the next summer, giving polar novices an opportunity to get experience at sledging. William, an experienced sledger, remained at the hut concentrating on construction and helping with the ponies.

May 1911 saw all the men gathered in the hut ready to begin their winter work. There was no daylight at all in the winter months so, apart from a record-breaking journey by Edward Wilson's small team to study the nesting habits of the Emperor penguin, there was little outside activity, but plenty to do by way of preparation of equipment. When spring arrived sledging trips began in earnest. By late October all was ready for the attempt on the Pole and William began to write his second Antarctic diary.

The attempt to reach the pole had been carefully planned by Captain Scott. The strategy was to use three teams to lay depots of provisions, from Corner Camp to close to the South Pole, to be used on the return journey.



Outside the hut, William far right

William's party, with two motorsledges, left first on October 24th 1911. With him were engineer Day, Lieutenant Evans and steward Hooper. On October 31st a team consisting of Atkinson, Keohane, Wright and Seaman Evans set off using ponies to pull the sledges. Finally, the dog-hauled sledges, with Scott, Wilson, Oates and Apsley Cherry-Garrard.

The first motorsledge soon failed. They reached Corner Camp but then William's sledge also gave out. Now they had to haul by hand. On November 8th they arrived at One Ton Depot and selected what was needed to be taken on. They were hauling 200lbs per man. On November 15th they arrived at the pre-arranged gathering point and camped.

In the meantime the weather had proved worse than anticipated and the ponies had suffered most. The dog teams soon caught up with them but William's group still had to wait six days for the others to arrive.

Day and Hooper returned to base on November 24th. The ponies now either died or were shot to provide food for the dogs. They eventually reached the Beardmore Glacier. On December 11th they laid the Lower Glacier Depot. Meares and Dimitri returned to base with the dogs. The remaining men man-hauled until December 20th when Atkinson, Silas, Keohane and Cherry-Garrard were sent back by Scott.

William now joined up with Crean, Bowers and Lieutenant Evans while Scott continued with Wilson, Oates and Seaman Evans. They made good progress, although William celebrated Christmas Day, and his birthday, by falling down a crevasse.

On January 4th 1912 Scott sent back a final party consisting of Lieutenant Evans, Tom Crean and William, but chose to add a fifth person, Bowers, to his own group. It was a moving farewell. "*Poor old Crean wept and even Lashly was affected,*" wrote Scott.

William set off for a remarkable journey that was to win him and Tom Crean the Albert Medal. On the 16th, Scott's party came across the tracks made by Amundsen. The next day they camped at the South Pole, five weeks after Amundsen's team had come and gone.

The Polar Journey

Evans, Crean and William set out on their return walk of more than 750 miles.

The Journey of the Last Support Party

The story of the return journey of the last of Captain Scott's supporting parties is as remarkable as any of the accounts of adventures experienced on the *Terra Nova* expedition.

When the time came for the final attempt on the Pole, Captain Scott decided to take an extra man in his group. Lieutenant Evans' party was therefore reduced to three men - himself, Tom Crean and William Lashly. Scott was optimistic about the returning party reaching base safely, despite the fact that the sledge-hauling team was a man short and Evans was the only trained navigator. Perhaps because the journey did not involve Scott, and Lieutenant Evans did not write a full account on his return to Britain, it was many years before the story was told in any detail. This was thanks to Apsley Cherry-Garrard who used William's detailed field notes to describe the events in his 1937 account of the expedition, *The Worst Journey in the World*.

William only began keeping detailed notes on this expedition just before his party turned back. In an entry for January 3rd 1912 he wrote of how Captain Scott had explained to them that not everyone could continue to the Pole and that his selection of the men to accompany him was no reflection on the abilities or fitness of the three who were returning. Scott wrote in his diary, "*They are disappointed, but take it well.*" He encouraged William by asking him to look after the ponies which were to arrive on the *Terra Nova* and also asked him to stay on in the Antarctic until the Polar party returned. The next day they parted company. William wrote:

"We wished them every success and a safe return, and asked each one if there was anything we could do for them when we got back...I think we all felt it very much."

At first, Lieutenant Evans' party made good progress, although not without some early problems with snow blindness, crevasses and blizzards. On the 17th of January they had a remarkable escape from ice ridges and crevasses on the glacier. Even the usually unflappable William wrote "*We have to-day experienced what we none of us ever wants to be our lot again.*" On the 19th Evans began to have severe problems with his eyes and could no longer lead the group.

On the 22nd January he started to have symptoms which William immediately recognised as those of scurvy. Evans soon developed diarrhoea and his general physical condition began to deteriorate. William reports in his diary entry for February 8th, “*I have now to do nearly everything for him.*” A few days later they had no choice but to place him on the sledge and pull him along. Progress was inevitably very slow. “*This morning,*” writes William, “*he wished us to leave him, but this we could not think of. We will stand by him to the end one way or other.*” On the 18th Evans was so ill he could travel no further. William and Tom Crean agreed together that William would remain and nurse him as well as he could while Tom set out alone to try to cover the 30 mile journey to Hut Point and get help. If Crean failed, William would starve to death as there was very little food left.

On the evening of February 20th William and Lieutenant Evans heard the sound of dogs outside their tent. Tom Crean had made it back to base and, despite appalling weather, Dr Atkinson and the dog driver Dimitri had reached them. William gladly handed over his patient to a medical professional (who later commented on the superb care that had kept him alive) and wrote in his diary, “*It seems to me we are in a new world, a weight is off my mind and I can once more see a bright spot in the sky for us all, the gloom is now removed.*”

They returned safely to Hut Point and, under the expert care of Dr Atkinson, Evans began his slow recovery. He was invalided out on the *Terra Nova* when the ship returned to Britain after leaving the mail and the ponies which William was to care for. Back in England, Evans made a full recovery and went on to follow a distinguished career in the Royal Navy. When he wrote his book *South with Scott* in 1938 he dedicated it to William Lashly and Tom Crean. After the survivors of the expedition returned to Britain in 1913 William and Tom were invited to meet the King and to be presented with the Albert Medal for their bravery and dedication in saving Lieutenant Evans’ life.

Meanwhile, back at Hut Point, concern was being expressed for the safety of Captain Scott’s party who were due back from their attempt to reach the South Pole. Aspley Cherry-Garrard decided to take dog-handler Dimitri and set off for One Ton Depot where they hoped to meet up with Scott.

The Search for Captain Scott

Captain Scott had ordered that the dogs should not be put in any risk as they may be needed the following year if the initial attempt on the Pole failed. But the journey to the One Ton Depot was relatively straight-forward and, despite his self-confessed limitations at navigation, Apsley reached there on March 3rd. On March 10th, with Dimitri feeling the effects of the rapidly falling temperature (now minus 35° F), the dogs struggling, and the weather making it difficult for Apsley to see through his glasses they decided to return to base.

On March 27th Dr Atkinson, with one seaman, ventured out again without the dogs. But, in the absence of any sign of Scott's party, they returned. It was now getting well into the Antarctic winter and among the men there was some concern about the safety of the southern party, although Lieutenant Evans, back recovering in England, was telling the press that he imagined that Scott had reached the Pole soon after Amundsen and would have reached Hut Point in the second week of March.

The 13 men who remained at Cape Evans when the *Terra Nova* returned to New Zealand faced appalling circumstances. William was among them. For him and his friends, Tom Crean and Thomas Williamson, it was the fifth winter they had spent in the Antarctic.

Though they were comfortable and provisions were excellent the weather proved to be the worst that had been experienced so far and for weeks on end they were confined to the hut. The worst aspect was the uncertainty about the situation of their missing colleagues. Captain Scott's party was assumed by now to be dead, but how they had died and whether they had reached the Pole were not known.

The winter work progressed well, not least because of the extra space available in the hut. The mules frequently became fractious, particularly when the blizzards prevented them from being exercised, but William oversaw their care and Cherry-Garrard wrote that they "*reflected the greatest credit upon Lashly, who groomed them every day and took the greatest care of them.*"

Finding the Polar Party

In the spring they discussed plans for the new search for the Polar party. Cherry-Garrard wrote in his diary: *"I had a long talk with Lashly, who asked me what I candidly thought had happened to the Southern Party. I told him a crevasse. He says he does not think so: he thinks it is scurvy"*. William explained the route they had taken in the last returning party and suggested that Scott was likely to have returned the same way. Cherry continues:

"Lashly thinks it would be practically impossible for five men to disappear down a crevasse. Where three men got through (and he said it would be impossible to get worse stuff than they came through), five men would be still better off. This is not my view, however. I think that the extra weight of one man might make all the difference in crossing a big crevasse: and if several men fell through one of those great bridges when sledge and men were all on it, I do not think the bridge would hold the sledge."



The search party – William second from right, back row.

On October 29th, having set out depots in the usual manner, the search journey began with the eight-man mule party (which included William) leading the way. The rest of the party with dog teams caught up with them at One Ton Depot nearly two weeks later. William, in a letter to Reginald Skelton his colleague from *Discovery* days, described what followed.

"Our intentions were to go as far as Mt Darwin if we did not pick them up before reaching there. Almost everybody seemed to think they had gone down a crevasse but I said it was almost impossible

for 5 people to go down a hole while they were on ski & one days march beyond 1 ton depot we saw what looked to be a cairn away to the east of our course but right on last years course."

It was, in fact, the Polar party's tent. After digging down they cleared the entrance. Dr Atkinson asked William to go with him into the tent. William's account continues:

"On entering the tent we found it contained only 3 people but we could not identify anyone the tent being so dark, we decided to uncover them but by their look they must have a bad time, & it looked very much like Capt Scott being the last survivor, it must have been a dreadful time for him to wait for death."

William emerged from the tent in tears. Dr Atkinson read aloud to the men from the diaries they had recovered. They removed all the possessions from the dead men before allowing the tent to drape over their bodies and then created a snow cairn over it. They recited the burial service and all signed a note about their dead colleagues and placed it on top.

William used Tryggve Gran's skis to make a simple cross which was placed on the cairn. It was only now, as Dr Atkinson read out aloud the events recorded in Scott's diary, that William found out what had happened to the friends he had cheered on their way to the Pole ten months earlier.

The search party spent that night beside Scott's tent, though according to Seaman Keohane, they slept very little. The next day they searched for the body of Captain Oates but soon realized it was hopeless and set off back to Hut Point.

In the meantime, Lieutenant Evans (Deputy Leader of the Expedition) had recovered sufficiently to sail the *Terra Nova* back to the Antarctic and arrived on January 18th 1913. William and the rest of the expedition survivors joined the ship.

The search party had already decided to erect a cross in memory of the Polar party and the ship's carpenter set to work to make one. There was some discussion as to the inscription and they decided on the

concluding line of Tennyson's poem 'Ulysses', "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

On January 18th William wrote a brief letter to his brother in which he explains:

"We found the party on the 12th of November on our own search for them 140 miles from Hut Point & 11 miles from the 1 Ton Depot...but I very much doubt if they had reached there they could have gone much further as when they camped, & the worst blizzard came on lasting several days, they were finished."

On the same day he wrote in a much more detailed letter to Lieutenant Skelton:

"One thing is almost certain, is, that had they reached one ton depot they would not have reached hut point as the weather was so bad, & although the food & fuel there was ample, it is doubtful where they were in a fit state to carry enough to take them 120 miles, & it appears that Dr Wilson was unable to do much for several days before they arrived at their last camp, they appears to have all been badly frost bitten. But it appears by Capt Oates coming on as far as he did that they expected the dogs out to at least [longitude] 80.30, but as they failed it was all over with them, of course the dogs did go out but had returned from 1 ton after remaining there 6 days."

On January 20th a small party of men, including William, left the ship to take the cross by sledge to Hut Point. Observation Hill was chosen for its position and the cross was raised nine feet high and fixed several feet into the ground in the hope it would never move. Although the paint has worn off in places the cross still remains.

The *Terra Nova* returned to Cardiff on June 14th 1913. William became the shipkeeper while refitting was taking place. He had now completed his service with the Royal Navy and returned to Portsmouth. The day after his "discharge to pension" on October 10th 1913, William signed up to the Royal Fleet Reserve and was called up almost immediately, even before he could begin the new job as a surveyor's 'tapeholder' he had been offered with the Board of Trade at Cardiff.

The Naval Reserve and World War 1

By August 2nd 1914, William was back in training on *HMS Victory II*, the depot for the Royal Naval Division. He joined the battleship *HMS Irresistible* on September 1st 1914 which, by October, was at Dover, under the command of Admiral Hood. Her duties included bombardment of German army forces along the Belgian coast in support of Allied troops fighting on the front. During the German raid on Gorleston in November she was ordered to sea but did not come into action. *Irresistible* returned to the Channel Fleet later in November 1914, and then transferred to Sheerness in November to guard against a possible German invasion. The squadron transferred back to Portland on December 30th.

On February 1st 1915 they set sail for the Dardanelles, in company with *HMS Majestic*, to join the battleship fleet to help with the bombardments and the final attempt by the British battleship squadron to clear the Dardanelles Channel.

In late February two partially successful attacks were made by the British using a squad of 12 ships to try to clear the mines and to destroy the defences. Among them was *HMS Irresistible* with William Lashly as one of the stokers. Bad weather and the slow advance of ground troops ashore hampered progress and it wasn't until March 18th that a final attack using 18 ships in three waves was made. Unfortunately, the Allied forces had failed to properly reconnoitre the area and to sweep it for mines and *HMS Bouvet* struck a mine, capsized and sank within a couple of minutes, killing 600 men. The British pressed on with the attack. *HMS Inflexible* began to withdraw and struck a mine near where the *Bouvet* went down, killing 30 men.

William's ship, *HMS Irresistible*, was the next to be mined. At 4.15pm they were taking part in a bombardment of Turkish forts from a distance of 11,000 yards. She was drifting with her engines stopped, and ran onto a submerged moored mine which exploded under the bilge of the starboard engine-room. The engine room flooded and only three men escaped. The water pressure then broke down the midship bulkhead, and the port engine room also flooded. The ship was listing

at seven degrees with the stern down and the engine gone. *Irresistible* then came under heavy Turkish fire and the captain ordered the crew to abandon ship. *HMS Wear*, despite enemy fire, managed to rescue 28 officers and 582 men from the *Irresistible*.

When *HMS Ocean* tried to take *Irresistible* under tow it, too, struck a mine leaving her helpless. As *Irresistible* began to drift the remaining crew members were taken off. At 5.50pm the ship was abandoned. It seems that it drifted back into range of the Turkish forts and was sunk by gunfire. The British withdrew. The Captain of the light cruiser *HMS Amethyst* reported that on the next day,

“our most important repairs having been completed, we cast off from the Blenheim and anchored, but operations were suspended. The weather set in bad and continued so for some days. The old small torpedo boats arrived from Suez Canal during this period, one having been abandoned in a sinking condition in the Aegean. Also during this period the fishermen crews of the trawlers (used for clearing the mines) were relieved by active service ratings and the vacancies in our complement filled up by a draft from the crew of the Irresistible. They arrived with no kits and very few clothes.”

Among this “draft” was William Lashly. He became an official member of the *Amethyst* crew for the next ten months before eventually returning to Portsmouth where he remained, attached to the *HMS Victory* base ship until his demobilisation on February 10th 1919.



Cardiff Links

Before the decision was made to appoint Captain Scott as leader of a second expedition to the Antarctic, Lieutenant Evans, who sailed on the relief ship *Morning* for the 1901 National Expedition, was making plans for his own expedition based on Cardiff. He developed a strong relationship with the city and local media. When he agreed to give up his own plans and become Scott's second-in-command, he made full use of his Cardiff contacts. As a result, more money was raised in Cardiff for the expedition than in any other British city. In a show of gratitude to the people of South Wales for their generosity, the expedition used Cardiff Docks as their final port of call in the UK.

The *Terra Nova* arrived in Cardiff five days before its planned departure date to finish preparations for the voyage and to take on fuel. Coal, engine and lamp oil, cooking utensils and even Scott's sleeping bag were provided by Welsh supporters and companies. Expedition members were invited to stay in local homes and functions and dinners, one of which is still celebrated every year by the Captain Scott Society, were held to bid the expedition farewell. The ship was opened up to visitors and many people paid to go on board. They finally set sail on June 15th 1910, cheered by thousands as they left the docks, and William was on his way to visit the Antarctic for the second time.



As a further thank you to the people of Wales Captain Scott promised that Cardiff would be the first British port the *Terra Nova* would visit on its return. Although Captain Scott died on the expedition the promise was kept and three years later it was Bute Dock and the people of Cardiff, rather than London or Portsmouth, who welcomed home the *Terra Nova*. So, on June 14th 1913 William found himself back in Cardiff where, like all the expedition's members, he received a warm hero's welcome. The *Terra Nova* remained there longer than

was anticipated and William took on the official role of shipkeeper for the many weeks it took for the ship to be fitted out for its return to whaling in the Arctic.

In July William and Tom Crean were present at a lecture given by Lieutenant Evans to the Cardiff Naturalist Society at which they received public recognition for their bravery and skill in saving his life. They also travelled to Buckingham Palace to receive the award of the Albert Medal and visited the Royal Naval College at Osborne with Lieutenant Evans where their lectures were apparently received with “wild enthusiasm”.

William was due to retire from the Navy later in the year and was offered a job as a surveyor’s ‘tapeholder’ with the Marine Survey Staff of the Board of Trade in Cardiff. William also signed up to the Royal Fleet Reserve at Portsmouth. When, within a few months, England was at war, William (aged 47) was back in training on *HMS Victory II*, before joining the battleship *HMS Irresistible* on September 1st.

After his demobilization William returned to Cardiff and his job with the Board of Trade. He and Alice settled there living at 17 Mayfield Avenue.

He retained his interest in Antarctic matters and met up from time to time with old friends. He visited Apsley Cherry-Garrard at his family estate in Herefordshire and met him and others at the annual reunion at the Café Royal. When Cherry-Garrard eventually set about writing his account of Scott’s last expedition, William sent him an expanded version of his diary.



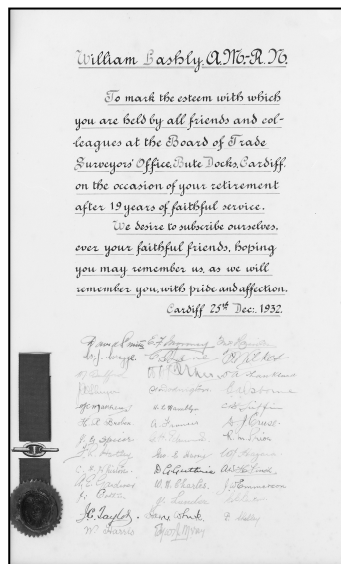
William’s Cardiff home.

According to Commander Ellis, editor of William’s Antarctic diaries, in those Cardiff years “*his interest never flagged. Fit and alert as ever, he was constantly in demand with his slides and magic lanterns for the Antarctic lecture*”.

He attended lectures on Antarctic themes, including one by Frank Wild, at the Cardiff Naturalists' Society and spoke himself to the Junior Section on the topic "*Southward with Scott*". In 1926, William met up with Tom Crean in Portsmouth where they were principal guests at a celebration of the appointment of Evans as Captain of the battleship *HMS Repulse*.

William travelled from Cardiff to Cambridge to visit the newly established Scott Polar Research Institute and visited Gestingthorpe Hall to stay with Captain Oates' mother. He was remembered for many years in the Cardiff area for the lantern-slide lectures he gave.

In 1932 William, aged 65, retired from his job with the Board of Trade. His colleagues gave him a handmade certificate of retirement, (now held by the Dundee Heritage Trust) on which they wrote "*To mark the esteem with which you are held by all friends and colleagues at the Board of Trade Surveyors Office, Bute Docks, Cardiff. We desire to subscribe ourselves ever your faithful friends hoping you may remember us as we will remember you with pride and affection.*" He returned with Alice and their daughter to his home village of Hambledon to live in the house which had been built for him and which he called *Minna Bluff*.



William died aged 72 on June 12th 1940 in the Royal Hospital Portsmouth, just four months after his wife Alice. Apsley Cherry-Garrard, scientist on Scott's second expedition, had kept in touch with him over the years and wrote an appreciation for the Scott Polar Research Institute's journal *Polar Record*, recalling how "*behind that kindly smile, that half filled the engine-room hatch on the Terra Nova, there were bottled up great reserves of quiet energy.*" He concluded his tribute, "*So perhaps he is now looking for a good whack of pemmican and still singing that cheery little ditty with which he used to end his day's work on earth.*"

William's Antarctic Diaries and Letters

On the day the National Antarctic Expedition left England on the *Discovery* in August 1901, William Lashly started to keep a daily diary about his journey. For this expedition he wrote his notes in a large account book. Later, on the *Terra Nova* expedition, when his record keeping was more selective, he made use of a much smaller maroon Navigating Officer's Notebook which had a penholder attached and an elastic securing strap.

Commander Ellis, after editing William's diaries for publication in 1969, comments, "*no item of interest was allowed to pass without being faithfully recorded.*" In his introduction to the book, Sir Vivian Fuchs writes, "*In spite of the laconic style of Lashly's writings one gains a sense of his imperturbability in the face of every situation*".

A glance at a few pages of the original diaries (now kept at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge) reveals a simple but clear hand and a direct style, reporting quite factually the weather and the events of the day. It is not surprising, given the very basic nature of William's education, that his writing is not without grammatical errors or spelling mistakes. William was particularly conservative with the use of full stops and capital letters! Apsley Cherry-Garrard explains in the obituary of William he wrote for *The Polar Record* in 1940 how, when quoting from William's diaries in his own book on the second expedition, one of the greatest difficulties he had was preventing the printing compositor from altering Lashly's spelling.

The significance of William's diaries lies partly in the fact that they are written by one of the "men" rather than an officer or scientist. But the *Terra Nova* diary is also important because it provides valuable information about the polar journey and, in particular, the experiences of the final support party. It describes very vividly how Lieutenant Evans, Tom Crean and William battled to return safely.

Published Versions

In 1936, long after the safe return of the *Terra Nova*, the University of Reading appointed the skilled and eccentric illustrator Robert Gibbings as a lecturer in Typography, Book Production and

Illustration. He contacted William to ask for permission to use his *Terra Nova* Expedition diary for one of his student projects. William wrote back in October 1938 saying that he saw no reason why not and was happy to help, though he did seem concerned about the brevity of his field notes and explained,

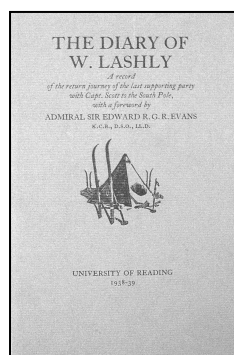
"My diary is as I dotted it down after doing a very hard days dragging. I could not bring myself to write more although many little incidents cropped up each day as we trudged along hour after hour, trusting in God to give us strength to fulfil the duty we were entrusted with and to bring back to safety Lieut Evans."

It is not clear why Robert Gibbings selected William's diary but presumably he had read Apsley Cherry-Garrard's *The Worst Journey in the World* in which William's expanded field notes were reported in great detail. Cherry-Garrard wrote in his introduction to the section based on William's diary, *"When I was looking for data concerning the return of the Last Supporting Party of which no account has been published, I wrote to Lashly and asked him to meet and tell me all he could remember. He was very willing, and added that somewhere or other he had a diary which he had written: perhaps it might be of use? I asked him to send it me, and was sent some dirty thumb'd sheets of paper. And this is what I read..."*

Gibbings' edition of the diary has the lengthy title *'The Diary of W. Lashly, a record of the return journey of the last supporting party with Capt Scott to the South Pole, with a foreword by Admiral Sir Edward R. G. R. Evans'*.

It is eight inches by five and a half inches in size and contains just 37 pages. The text is identical to the section on the return of the final support group in *The Worst Journey in the World* but is illustrated with four small wood-cuts. Robert Gibbings' name does not appear in the publication but there is an initial page which explains:

"This book was printed in the Fine Art Department of the University of Reading, the type being set by printers' apprentices and the illustrations designed and engraved by students of book



production. 75 copies have been printed for private circulation of which this is number ____”.

In his brief foreword, Evans, whose life William and Tom Crean had saved and who was by then an Admiral, wrote:

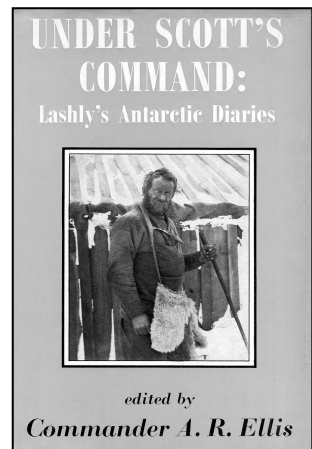
“This little volume is a chapter from the life of one of those steel-true Englishmen whose example sets us all a-thinking. I owe my life to Lashly's devotion and admirable duty-sense. He is one of those Yeomen of England whose type gave us Drake's men and Nelson's men and Scott's and Shackleton's men, and will do so again.”

Only 75 copies were printed and this little red book is very rare.

Under Scott's Command

In 1969, Commander Ellis published his edited version of William's diaries from both expeditions, supplemented with material from Scott's official record, called *“Under Scott's Command: Lashly's Antarctic Diaries”*. Commander Ellis had served as a schools' liaison officer for the South West of England and was always on the lookout for interesting material for his talks.

It was William Lashly's daughter, Alice, who introduced him to the diaries. When Commander Ellis was invalided out of the Navy in 1966 because of failing eyesight he decided to try to make the diaries more widely available and so set about the job of transcribing and editing them.



His book was published by Victor Gollantz and an American edition was published by Taplinger the same year. The internal contents of the two editions are identical although, interestingly, the publisher's introduction on the dust cover of the American edition was clearly written for a different audience, and assumes no knowledge of the history of the two expeditions.

The publisher's introduction on the dustcover of the UK edition of William's edited diaries observes:

“One suspects that many diaries which form the basis of books were written with publication in mind. Of William Lashly, this suspicion never arises: he was a man of great modesty and was self-effacing in the extreme.”

The *Geographical Journal*, in a contemporary review of the book, concluded:

“These modest records highlight and complement the well-known story of Scott of the Antarctic, and will inspire admiration for a very brave and gentle man, in the true sense of the word.”

The book appears to have been well received. On the 17th April, the day of publication, Commander Ellis was interviewed about the diaries on Steve Race’s popular BBC Radio programme *Home this Afternoon*. In a letter (held by the Dundee Heritage Trust) written to Alice Lashly a few days later, an old friend Lilian Thomas complained that having heard the broadcast she had tried to buy the book only to find that it was already sold out! The book is now long out of print and not usually on the shelves of public libraries.

Letters

In addition to his diaries, several of William’s Antarctic letters to family and friends have survived and are kept in the archives of the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge. Particularly interesting is William’s correspondence with Reginald Skelton, some of which was explored in a research paper by George Skinner in the SPRI journal *Polar Record* in May 2017.

Engineer-Lieutenant Reginald Skelton was First Engineer on Scott’s *Discovery* expedition. He got on well with William who he described as “*by far and away the finest man in the ship*”. Scott initially asked Skelton to join his second expedition and even took him to France to see the trials of motorised sledges, an idea which Skelton had proposed seven years earlier while on the first expedition. However, Scott took Lieutenant Evans as his



Reginald Skelton

deputy on the expedition instead. Skelton kept in touch with the expedition's progress and, in particular, the largely disappointing performance of the motor sledges, by corresponding with William.

On October 21st 1911, William wrote from "*Winter Quarters*" to Skelton to inform him that there were problems with the sledges. "*We have had to make good a lot of defects ...The water tank at the back of the engine with the exhaust running through, caused the after cylinder to overheat so we have done away with it and fitted some straight pipes to try to overcome the heating.*" They also fitted a bonnet over the engines to create a cooling effect from the draught. There were other design problems. "*The aliminun (sic) on the bottom of the runners completely done for the rollers, but we have repaired them & made new ones,*" wrote William. The back axle-casing of Day's sledge broke in half and had to be repaired but he was optimistic that it "*seems as strong as before. I hope it will get to the Beardmore. If we get there at all with them we shall leave them there as we are only taking Petrol for that distance.*"

Another letter from Skelton was among the post delivered by the *Terra Nova* when the ship arrived in 1912 to re-supply the expedition. William, Teddy Evans and Tom Crean, having survived their remarkable return journey as the last support party, arrived at base just in time for William to write a reply before the *Terra Nova* set off for New Zealand. "*The motors did not go far as they were not powerful enough to pull the load required of them,*" Lashly explained. They would only manage about a mile before over-heating then, when they had cooled down, the carburettor had to be made warm so they could start the engine again. He also reported that the "*big end brasses were also a weak spot as we broke 3 up completely*". Eventually, as William had anticipated in his previous letter, they had to abandon the motors and began manhauling "*200 pounds per man*" of supplies to be stashed in depots for use when the polar party returned.

Scott's party never made it back from the Pole. After the following winter the *Terra Nova* arrived to take the surviving members of the expedition home. William wrote a long letter to Skelton using several sheets of official expedition notepaper, the first of which was franked with an expedition stamp and postmarked British Antarctic Expedition,

January 18, 1913, part of the last of four lots of mail to be sent from the Victoria Land official post office (of which Captain Scott had been made Postmaster!). *“I am sorry the motors did not go better, the longest run we could get out of them on the Barrier was one mile then we had to stop one hour to cool down before we could move again.”* When the snow was hard and ridged the sledges performed better and William reports that on one occasion he was able to do four miles without a stop, but *“soft snow was all against us”*. The one success he did concede was that they proved useful in moving large quantities of supplies to Corner Camp *“which was a great deal of help to the Ponies”*.

In some respects the letters are technical reports by a stoker to an Engineer Lieutenant on practical aspects of a shared project. William always retained an element of formality when he wrote to Lieutenant Skelton, beginning his letters *“Dear Sir”* and concluding *“yours faithfully”* or even *“yours respectfully”*. But the relationships Skelton had built with his men on the first expedition were close and William’s letters contain much personal material and observations on wider aspects of the expedition.

For example, in his 1910 letter from Lyttelton, he reported how Scott had sacked Lieutenant Riley, the ship’s Chief Engineer, no doubt aware that Skelton would have been particularly interested to hear that the ship sailed from New Zealand without a commissioned officer in charge in the engine room! He also commented perceptively on the sacking of Thomas Feather, who had served as Boatswain on the *Discovery*, over what was explained as a falling out with Lieutenant Renwick, adding *“but really the truth is too much drink”*.

Similarly, in his final letter to Skelton, William described the initial attempts to meet up with Scott’s party returning from the Pole and the eventual discovery of the bodies seven months later. Interestingly, in light of discussions about the causes of Scott’s demise, he went on to observe, *“One thing is almost certain, is, that had they reached one ton depot they would not have reached hut point as the weather was so bad, & although the food & fuel there was ample, it is doubtful where they were in a fit state to carry enough to take them 120 miles.”*

William Lashly - the Man and his Legacy

Physically, William Lashly appears to have been a remarkable man. Captain Scott wrote of him in his report of the *Discovery* expedition that, in appearance, he was the most deceptive man he had ever seen:

"He was not above the ordinary height, nor did he look more than ordinarily broad, and yet he weighed 13st 8lb and had one of the largest chest measurements in the ship".

Apsley Cherry-Garrard wrote in William's obituary, *"He stripped big and looked small, and was as tough as nails"*.

William certainly took trouble to keep himself fit. He was a teetotaler and a non-smoker all his life. According to Captain Scott, William *"was never in anything but the hardest condition"*. On both expeditions, when not engaged in sledging, he took advantage of what physical recreation was available. There are frequent references in William's *Discovery* diary to playing football and on April 1st 1903 wrote, *"Have taken up hockey as a passtime and exirsise. We play a match every afternoon"*.

Perhaps the greatest test of William's strength and stamina was the Western journey during the second winter of the *Discovery* expedition. Well into the journey, when Scott decided, based on careful observation of his men, to proceed with only half the party, he kept William and Seaman Evans with him. *"With these two men behind me, our sledge seemed to become a living thing and the days of slow progress were numbered,"* he wrote. When Scott and Evans disappeared down a crevasse, William kept himself from following and saved them all.

William's physical strength and stamina were put to the test again on Scott's second expedition when, between them, he and Crean saved Lieutenant Evans' life.

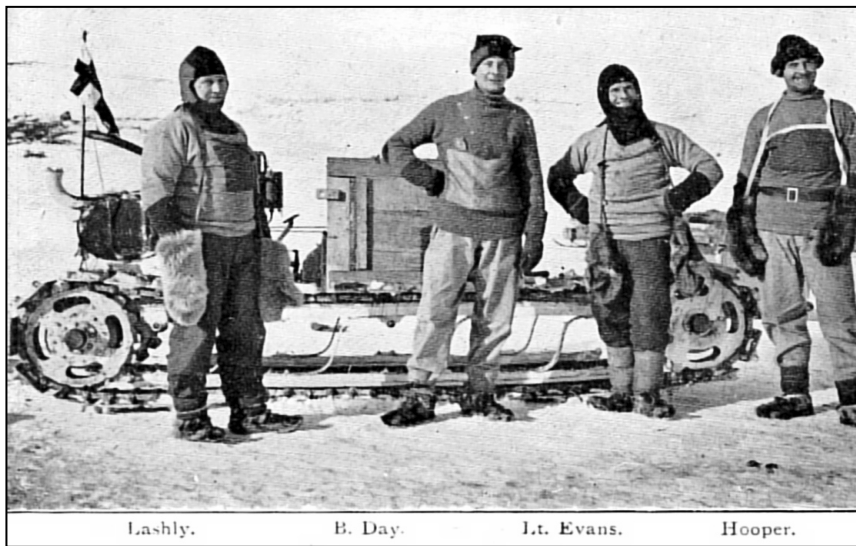
The 35-night winter journey by Apsley Cherry-Garrard, Bill Wilson and Birdie Bowers in 1911 to collect emperor penguins' eggs from their breeding grounds at Cape Crozier is frequently seen as the toughest man-hauling journey in polar history. Years later, when

reflecting on whether the right three men had been chosen for this arduous journey, Apsley wrote in *The Worst Journey in the World*:

"I don't know. There could never have been any doubt about Bill and Birdie. Probably Lashly would have made the best third... Lashly was wonderful. If only Scott had taken a four-man party and Lashly to the Pole!"

A man of all trades

On the *Terra Nova* expedition Scott had pinned a great deal of hope on the motorsledges which he put under the "able supervision of Day and Lashly", and it was no fault of theirs that the 'motors' gave so much trouble. Commander Ellis points out that "*Lashly's naval training had made him more of a blacksmith than a mechanic, but he had mastered the mechanics of the motorsledges*", and the Norwegian team member Tryggve Gran said of William that "*whatever he did he was first class. Day could not have had a more all-round helper*".



Photographer on the *Terra Nova* expedition, Herbert Ponting, no stranger himself to working long hours in the frustrating Antarctic environment, was impressed by Day and Lashly's perseverance when the temperamental 'motors' kept failing:

"Two days later, the axle-easing - repaired in a remarkable neat and workmanlike manner, and better and stronger than ever - was once more in place, I realized that Day and Lashly were men

whom nothing could daunt and whose resource and skill were equal to any emergency," and later, "no praise could be too great for the persistence with which Day and Lashly struggled with these motors".

Scott, too, was impressed, and recalls how on one occasion *"Day and Lashly worked all night on repairs in a temperature of -25°"*.

This persistence was no surprise to Captain Scott who had already written about this quality some years before in his report about the work of William and Skelton in repairing the ordinary sledges during the *Discovery* expedition:

"Each difficulty only serves to show more clearly their resourcefulness. This particular trouble has called on the metal workers, and no sooner had we halted and unpacked the sledges than Skelton and Lashly were hard at work with pliers, files and hammers stripping off the torn metal and lapping fresh pieces over the weak places. They have established a little workshop in this wild spot, and for hours the scrape of the file and the tap of the hammer have feebly broken the vast silence. We have hopes of the lapping process which is now being effected, but it needs very careful fitting; each separate piece of metal protection is made to overlap the piece behind it, like slates on a roof".

Not only was William technically competent, but he had the ability to apply his skills to a wide range of situations. As a key member of the company of both the *Discovery* and the *Terra Nova*, he was held in high esteem. Charles Ford, Steward on the *Discovery* comments,

"The Naval personnel of the Discovery compose as fine a body of men as could be found anywhere. The engine room staff were to some extent isolated as they worked a good deal in the engine room, which in winter quarters was their work-shop. But I do know that Lashly was a man of fine character. He was exceptionally reserved and even retiring in manner, always helpful to anyone needing help. I know that the engineer, Skelton, thought the world of him".

Commander Ellis, when researching the book he wrote based on William's diaries, discovered that:

"his shipmates remembered him, in their own words, as modest, reserved, hardworking, helpful, skilful, completely dependable, and a friend of all. One of them summed him up quite simply as the salt of the earth".

When Les Quartermain, Antarctic author and leader of the expedition to restore Scott's Hut, was collecting material for his book *Antarctica's Forgotten Men*, Clarence Hare, the ship's steward on the *Discovery*, wrote to him about his mess-mate Bill Lashly:

"He was always ready to help anyone who needed it ...one of the most popular men on the lower deck. With his engineering skill he could devise and make any sort of gadget that could be required by the scientists for any special work."

One incident in particular illustrates William's skill and competence. On the final leg of the sea journey towards the Antarctic the *Terra Nova* met high winds. Within three days the wind was logged at force ten, the engine-room pumps were blocked, and the water began to rise. Photographer Herbert Ponting recalls,

"During this time, mechanic Lashly worked up to his neck in the rushing water, trying to clear the suction pipe of the pump, but as the riding water now came in contact with the bottom of the big Scotch boiler, it became too hot for him to work there longer, and he had to abandon the effort In Lashly and Chief Engineer Williams, we had two splendid, efficient men, of whom no praise could be too great for the resource they displayed in those hours of peril ... As a last expedient, these two men set to work, in the sweltering heat, to cut through the steel bulkhead between the boiler and the hand pump shaft... Before midnight they had accomplished this difficult task".

Eventually the storm subsided and the flood waters were cleared. It is no wonder that he was described by Sir Clements Markham, the force behind the *Discovery* expedition, as *"the best man in the engine room"* and by engineer Reginald Skelton as *"the best man by far and away in the ship"*.

It was William's adaptability which proved so useful to both expeditions. On the first, when Scott discovered the inadequacy of the

ski boots, he records, *"In fact, ski boots are still worn, and in some cases have been fitted with a stouter sole by the cobbling abilities of that excellent man-of-all-trades, Lashly."* And on the second expedition, *"Today Wilson, Bowers, Cherry-Garrard, Lashly and I went to start the building of our first igloo. Cherry-Garrard had a knife which I designed and Lashly made."* Cherry-Garrard comments on the need during the last Spring for a sledge-meter, the original having been lost: *"Anyway, we found that we only had one left for the year, and this was more or less a dud... A lot of trouble was taken by Lashly to make another with a bicycle wheel from one of our experimental trucks"*. And although William never smoked himself Commander Ellis reports that he was happy to make Able Seaman Clarence Hare a three-pronged pipe cleaner which he continued to use long after the *Discovery* expedition had returned.

A Famous Cook

William's versatility even extended to the area of cooking. What might appear to be a relatively trivial skill took on much greater significance during field work in the Antarctic. Captain Scott wrote that a food break was a *"moment to be lived for – one of the brief incidents of the day to which we can look forward with real pleasure. The hot food seems to give new life, its grateful warmth appears to run out to every limb, exhaustion vanishes, and gradually that demon within which has gripped so tightly for the past hour or two, is appeased"*. It is understandable that someone who was efficient with the crude cooking implements and disciplined in the eking out of rations was respected by the men.

During the final stages of the winter journey of 1903, when times were difficult and food in short supply, William was given responsibility by Scott for the cooking, *"as he is far the best at the Primus, and can be relied upon not to exceed allowances."* When the cook Clissold was injured on the second expedition, Scott wrote, *"Clissold's work of cooking has fallen on Hooper and Lashly, and it is satisfactory to find that the various dishes and bread bakings maintain their excellence."*

On one occasion William travelled with Herbert Ponting on a photographic expedition to Shackleton's hut. On arrival, Ponting recalls, "*Lashly soon had a welcome hot meal steaming on the galley*". And Evans tells of how his returning party, on expecting to arrive at a food depot, "*built wonderful castles in the air as to what luxuries Lashly, who was a famous cook, should prepare on our return to winter quarters ... I set my heart on a steak and kidney pudding which my friend Lashly swore to make me*".



William working at the stove in the hut.

Wilson of the Lower Deck

Those who knew William best saw him as a steadfast, caring person with a sense of humour and the ability not only to get on with others, but to have time for their needs and problems. The officers of the *Terra Nova* summed him up in the greatest tribute of all when they called him "the Wilson of the Lower Deck", drawing a parallel with Edward Wilson whose patience, care, faith and humanity won him undying love and respect from officers and men alike.

Griffith Taylor, the Australian scientific member of the *Terra Nova* expedition, wrote in one of his reports for the Sydney Morning Herald about how much he loved exploring the ship. He recalled how "*one expedition down to the cosy engine room resulted in a glorious hot*

bath – which is quite sufficiently a rarity to be chronicled.” He tells how William had “*warmed a bucket of water by the Fijian method of dropping a red-hot lump of fire-bar therein*” to provide him with the treat of a hot tub.

William appears to have gone about things in a relaxed and calm way and it was only rarely that he was to be found not humming or singing, even if Scott felt bound to comment on one occasion that his singing “*can scarcely be called a finished performance.*” There was, however, at least once when Scott was grateful for William’s more sophisticated singing skills. Having gathered all the men for a morning church service he found that they couldn’t sing the hymns, so got William (who was a member of his village church choir and also rang the bells) along with Bowers, Wilson and Debenham to form an impromptu choir that “*led the less musical members where they should go.*”

Scott was well aware of the strength of William's character. On the Western Journey, when he shared a three-man tent with William and Seaman Evans, he comments,

“My companions spare no time for solemn thought, they are invariably cheerful and busy. Few of our camping hours go by without a laugh from Evans and a song from Lashly... However tiresome our day's march, or however gloomy the outlook, they always find something to jest about ... We were bruised, sore and weary, yet Lashly sang a merry stave as he stirred the pot.”

Recalling the crevasse incident during this journey, Scott adds,

“I saw what a frail support remained, and shouted to Lashly to ask what he could do, and then I knew the value of a level-headed companion”.

And on the polar journey he notes, “*Lashly is his old self in every respect, hardworking to the limit, quiet, abstemious and determined.*”

It was William's capacity for caring that motivated Scott to give him partial responsibility for the ponies which had been given to the *Terra Nova* expedition by the Indian Government. And when Captain Oates left with Scott for the final push to the pole he gave William instructions for their care. William was a natural choice to look after the remaining ponies through the final winter when Oates failed to

return. In the official report of the Expedition, Surgeon Atkinson writes that Lashly had been *“in entire care of the ponies and continued so throughout the winter. Their condition throughout was splendid and spoke volumes for the care with which he had looked after them”*. Commenting on their condition later Apsley Cherry-Garrard wrote, *“Altogether they reflected the greatest credit upon Lashly, who groomed them every day and took the greatest care of them”*, a view supported by the young Canadian scientist Charles Wright, who wrote, *“Lashly was given charge of the mules and nobody could have given them more attention than he did throughout the winter”*.

This aspect of his character is nowhere as obvious as in the care William showed when he and Crean got Lieutenant Evans safely home after he fell ill while leading the final returning party. Commander Ellis records that when help eventually arrived, *“The Doctor was lost in admiration for Lashly's care and nursing of Evans. Other doctors have said that they have never read better non-medical case-histories than Lashly kept of Evans' condition.”*

In his contribution to the official report of the expedition, Surgeon Atkinson observes, *“Lashly looked after Evans, and his nursing arrangements were splendid.”*

In a lecture presented to the Manchester Geographical Society on October 31st 1913, soon after his return to Britain, Evans explained:

“Lashly undoubtedly saved my life by his careful nursing. It was very brave of him to stay with me as he only had three meals left, and if relief had not come in time he would never have walked in without food, as he himself was very done after hauling in my sledge-team for over 1500 miles”.

William Lashly's Legacy

William is remembered in the village of Hambledon by the home development project named Lashly Meadow. Also in the village is the house he had had built for his retirement which he called ‘Minna Bluff’ after a rocky outcrop that juts out from Mount Discovery and which marks the route to and from the South Pole.

William left behind a number of items now housed at the Scott Polar Research Institute. Most significant are his two polar diaries and a small collection of letters. His mittens used on the expeditions can also be found there. The Dundee Heritage Centre has William's kit bag. Further afield, in Canterbury New Zealand, is his travel sewing kit.

Even further away, in Antarctica itself, a small group of mountains is named after him. They were discovered during William's first visit to Antarctica and named after him by Captain Scott. The location of the mountains is latitude 77° 54' 00 S, longitude 159° 33' 00 E. They are a rich source of geological specimens and fossils and modern Antarctic researchers often refer in their newsletters to "The Lashlys" as casually as William might have spoken of the "Downs" when growing up in Hambledon. He was as dedicated as any member of Scott's teams to the collection and preservation of specimens, even during the demanding final returning party journey with Crean and Evans, so would no doubt be pleased that the mountains which bear his name are revealing so much about the nature and history of the Antarctic. There is also a nearby Lashly Glacier at latitude 77° 57' 00 S, longitude 159° 50' 00 E, named after William by the New Zealand Party of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition (1956-58).



Lashly Mountains

Like many who served in the Navy, and particularly in battle situations, William was awarded a number of medals. Among them was the Africa General Service Medal for his role on *HMS Proserpine*.

For his contribution to research in the Antarctic on Scott's first expedition he received a bronze Polar Medal to which was added an "Antarctic 1912-14" clasp on his return from the *Terra Nova* expedition.

On July 26th 1913 William, along with Tom Crean, went to Buckingham Palace to meet King George V and to receive the Albert Medal for saving the life of Lieutenant Evans, the ceremony being reported on the front page of *The London Gazette*.



William with his medals (DHT)

Perhaps the most bizarre memorial, and one which must have brought a smile to William's eyes, is the worm which now bears his name! A study of parasitic worms found in the coastal wildlife of Antarctica was the special project of Edward Atkinson, the surgeon on Scott's *Terra Nova* Expedition who led the dog team to find William and the desperately sick Lieutenant Evans at the end of the return journey of the last support party. The worm, *Dibothriocephalus lashleyi* (or *Diphyllbothrium lashleyi*) was recovered from a Weddell seal and, following his usual practice, Surgeon Atkinson named it after one of his colleagues, on this occasion choosing William Lashly.

Shortly after his death in 1940, the *Geographical Journal*, the official journal of the Royal Geographical Society, carried an obituary of William. It concluded:

"Men such as Lashly are rare. The keynotes of his character were honesty, loyalty, and simplicity. He was too modest to realize how far the strength both of leader and expedition depended upon the presence among the rank and file of men like himself and his comrades of the mess deck".



William Lashly
1867 -1940

In the Footsteps of William Lashly

In 1990 we had the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of William and to land on the Antarctic continent. It was substantially easier for us travelling by jet plane, cruise ship and zodiac landing craft. Furthermore, our ship's approach was from South America to the Antarctic Peninsula rather than from New



Zealand to the Ross Ice Shelf. Nevertheless, the thrill of seeing our first iceberg and watching the penguins, seals and birdlife was not unlike that reported by William nearly 100 years earlier. We were there for the 50th anniversary of his death and thought about him on Christmas Day (it would have been his 123rd birthday!) as we travelled south on the Ocean Princess.

Ocean Cruise Lines were fortunate to obtain the services of Lars-Eric Lindblad to direct their first cruise to Antarctica. He had already been leading small groups of tourists on visits to the region for 25 years. His philosophy of controlled tourism in threatened areas had done much to strengthen their protection. *"When people have visited a beautiful area and fallen in love with it,"* he argued, *"they will become its guardians"*. Captain Bem de Haas (one of six captains on the ship) recalls, *"Lars-Eric Lindblad, our expedition leader, was on the bridge for most of the time; a tireless explorer full of knowledge and ideas. He usually sat in the corner of the wheelhouse on my elevated 'Master's Stool', telling us anecdotes and stories of previous adventures."*

We were fortunate not only to have the guidance of Lars-Eric Lindblad but also of other similarly-minded outstanding naturalists including ornithologist Peter Alden (who has since written eight Audubon Regional Field Guides), Francisco Erize (General Director of the Argentine Wildlife Foundation), Rene and Juio Preller (experienced Antarctic experts and highly skilled Zodiac drivers) and naturalist and author of *Antarctica: in the Interest of Mankind*, Olle Carlsson.

The *Ocean Princess* had been carefully prepared for the cruise with new bow thrusters to provide extra manoeuvrability in restricted areas and steel plates on the bow to protect her from the impact of small icebergs we came to know as "growlers".

Like William, since returning from the Antarctic, we have had many opportunities to present our own version of a 'lantern slide' show, illustrating the beauty and fragility of Antarctica, in schools and to many groups.

To Find Out More

Thousands of books have been published on the Antarctic and Scott's expeditions, some of the best now long out of print. Apart from the rare limited edition of William's *Terra Nova* diary, only two other authors have written specifically about William. The most thorough was Commander A.R.Ellis who edited William's two diaries and published them with the title *Under Scott's Command - Lashly's Antarctic Diaries* in 1969. This has been out of print for many years but second-hand copies appear from time to time (expect to pay £40+). The second is Leslie Quartermain who included William in his collection of short biographies *Antarctica's Forgotten Men* published in 1981. Apsley Cherry-Garrard drew on the field notes William sent to him for parts of *The Worst Journey in the World* (perhaps the best book on Scott's last expedition) which has been frequently reprinted and is freely available as a Project Gutenberg ebook at www.gutenberg.net. William also features in Anne Strathie's *From Ice Floes to Battlefields: Scott's Antarcotics in the First World War* published in 2015. In May 2017, the 150th anniversary of his birth was celebrated in a research paper *Some Reflections on Stoker William Lashly* by George Skinner in the Cambridge University journal, *Polar Record* (Vol. 53).

Lieutenant Teddy Evans, who survived thanks to William and Tom Crean's care and bravery, went on to write several books about the Antarctic including *South with Scott* which he dedicated to them. Captain Scott's diary from the *Discovery* expedition and his posthumously published *Terra Nova* diary are available in various versions (the *Terra Nova* diary may be viewed online at the Scott Polar Research Institute website). The classic biography by Charles Turley, *The Voyages of Captain Scott*, has many different editions and is also available as a Project Gutenberg ebook.

Of the many more recent publications exploring the life and personality of Captain Scott probably the best for objectivity and pace is David Crane's *Scott of the Antarctic*. An interesting and very readable fictional (though based closely on historical records) account of the five who reached the Pole is Beryl Bainbridge's *The Birthday Boys*. Sara Wheeler's *Terra Incognita: Travels in Antarctica* is a brilliant modern travel book full of history, humour and serious reflection. For those particularly interested in the ships William sailed on to the Antarctic, Ann Savours' *Voyages of the Discovery* and Michael Tarver's *S.S.Terra Nova (1884–1943)* are well-researched and beautifully presented. And for the young at heart, Ladybird have recently reprinted *Captain Scott: A Ladybird Adventure from History!*

In addition to our own dedicated website (*William Lashly, Antarctic Explorer*) and our William Lashly Facebook page, interesting general material may be found on the sites of the Dundee Heritage Trust and the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge. Both venues are well-worth visiting.

Notes

Most of the sources for this biography are published books and articles. We have also studied William's original diaries and a number of his letters at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge. We are grateful to the archive and library staff there for their support and assistance. The Dundee Heritage Trust (DHT) gave us access to some fascinating artefacts, including the picture of William with his medals, his retirement scroll and the Prayer Book he gave to Alice, which we have used as illustrations with DHT's permission. They also enabled us to explore the *Discovery* (and to share a celebratory meal in the Ward Room!) We are grateful to Michael Tarver for his help with clarifying William's role with the Board of Trade, to Christine Trickett for information about William's time in Hambledon, to Nick Bailey for comments on the manuscript and also to readers of the first edition of this book and visitors to our website who have encouraged us in our project to make William's story more widely known.

We have not given full references in this short publication. Readers wishing to read the fully referenced study on which this booklet is based should see *William Lashly – a tribute* which is freely available on-line at the William Lashly Antarctic Explorer website.

The copyright of the contents of the biography belongs to George and Valerie Skinner. We have no objections to any of this material being freely used for private projects, research, education or any other non-commercial purposes (though an acknowledgement of the source is always encouraging) and we welcome all efforts to understand and to promote awareness of the contribution made by William Lashly to polar exploration. We also welcome comments and we would be grateful to receive any additional information about William.

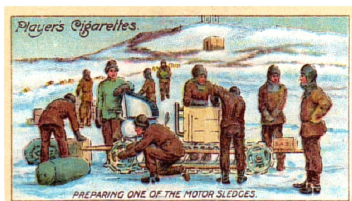
All the illustrations, apart from those supplied by DHT mentioned above, are from out-of-copyright publications or are otherwise in the public domain. The illustrations in the Timelines are from our sets of the first and second series of John Player & Sons' Polar Exploration cigarette cards, originally given away in cigarette packets in 1915 and 1916. The cover photograph was taken by Herbert Ponting on the *Terra Nova* expedition and shows William beside a motorsledge. The negative was discovered about 40 years ago when we had a framed enlargement made. William has watched over us in our home ever since. The authors may be contacted and copies of this book may be ordered through the *William Lashly Antarctic Explorer* website (<https://sites.google.com/site/lashlyantarcticexplorer/>).

Terra Nova Expedition Timeline



1910

15 June - *Terra Nova* left Cardiff for the south.
 9 September - Amundsen sent telegram to Scott, "Beg leave to inform you Fram proceeding Antarctica, Amundsen."
 29 October - *Terra Nova* arrived at Lyttelton, New Zealand.
 29 November - *Terra Nova* departed Port Chalmers, New Zealand, for the Antarctic.
 2 December - storm flooded ship; William up to his neck in water clearing pumps
 9 December - ship entered pack ice.
 31 December - land sighted.



1911

5 January - party landed at Cape Evans.
 24 January - depot-laying party left; William stayed to look after ponies.
 17 February - William went with Ponting to Shackleton's old hut at Cape Royds.
 17 April - William went with Scott to Hut Point.
 13 May - William at Cape Evans for the winter.
 22 June - Midwinter Day celebration.
 27 June - Wilson, Bowers and Cherry-Garrard left on the Winter Journey to Cape Crozier.
 24 October - motor-sledges started for Corner Camp.
 30 October - first motorsledge failed.
 1 November - second motorsledge failed.
 Main Polar party set out from Cape Evans.
 22 December - first support party turned back.
 25 December - William celebrated his birthday by falling down a crevasse.

1912

3 January - Scott named men in final Polar party: Scott, Bowers, Wilson, Edgar Evans and Oates.
 4 January - Final support party (Lt. Evans, Tom Crean and William) turned back.
 17 January - Scott's party reached South Pole.
 18 February - Tom Crean went for help while William cared for Lt. Evans.
 20 February - Dr. Atkinson arrived with dogs to transport William and Lt. Evans.
 22 February - William arrived at Hut Point with Lt. Evans.
 March - William and 12 others remained for a 3rd winter.
 29 October - William in search party which set out to find Scott's party.
 12 November - Bodies of Scott, Wilson and Bowers found by search party.

1913

18 January - *Terra Nova* arrived to take home survivors of the expedition.
 20 January - group, including William, left *Terra Nova* to set up memorial cross at Hut Point.
 26 January - *Terra Nova* left for home.
 14 June - *Terra Nova* arrived at Cardiff; William became Ship-keeper.
 26 July - William and Tom Crean received Albert Medal.
 10 October - William completed his service with the Royal Navy. Enrolled with the Royal Fleet Reserve the next day.



William Lashly was born in the Hampshire village of Hambledon on Christmas Day 1867. He left the village school when he was a little over eleven years old and at twenty-one joined the Royal Navy.

By the age of 52 he had served as Stoker on six Naval warships, including *HMS Irresistible* where he survived when it was mined and eventually sank during the Gallipoli Campaign in World War 1.

William also sailed on both of Captain Scott's expeditions to Antarctica. On the first expedition in 1901 he saved the life of Captain Scott. On the second, with Tom Crean, he saved the life of Lieutenant Edward Evans, who lived to become Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Navy and eventually Viscount Sir Edward Mountevans.

William Lashly was one of the last people to see Captain Scott alive and one of the first from the search party to enter the tent in which Scott and his companions had died on their return from the Pole.

